

# The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

Number Thirty-One

August, 1954

## News Letter

FROM THE SECRETARY'S OFFICE  
TO THE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

### THE TENTH TRIENNIAL MEETING HELD AT MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., MAY 8, 1954

President S. J. Arnesen was prevented from being present at the meeting. In his letter to the members he requested that he be relieved of his duties as President of the Association. Attorney Lionel G. Thorsness, First Vice President, presided both during the afternoon session and the evening dinner session.

Mr. Thorsness appointed Mr. O. I. Hertsgaard, Dr. Carlton C. Qualey, and Dr. Kenneth Bjork as the Committee on Nominations. This Committee presented the following slate of officers:

J. A. Aasgaard, President  
Lionel G. Thorsness, First Vice President  
Marthinus A. Strand, Second Vice President  
Andrew E. Wigeland, Treasurer  
J. Jørgen Thompson, Secretary

The newly elected officers met immediately after the business session and named the following to serve as members of the Executive Board together with the slate of officers elected by the members:

David T. Nelson  
Magnus Bjorndal  
S. J. Arnesen

Leaving one vacancy on the Board which will be filled at the next meeting of the Executive Board, which will most likely be held next October.

Mr. Birger Osland, who has served as a member of the Board since the organization of the Association, and Mr. Frederic Schaefer, who has served as a member since 1930, were named Honorary Members of the Executive Board.

#### Board of Editors:

Theodore C. Blegen, Managing Editor, Dean of the Graduate School, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis  
Kenneth Bjork, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn.  
Einar Haugen, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc.  
Carlton C. Qualey, Carleton College, Northfield, Minn.  
Clarence C. Clausen, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn.

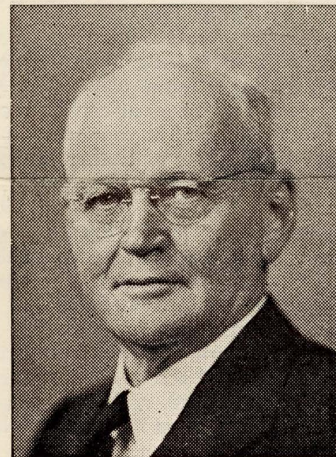
#### PRESENT STATUS OF MEMBERSHIP—

The following extracts are from the report of the Secretary to the Association:

The increase from \$3.00 to \$5.00 in the Associate membership dues has caused a heavier cancellation of memberships than had previously been experienced.

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### OUR NEW PRESIDENT



At the Tenth Triennial meeting of the Norwegian-American Historical Association, Dr. J. A. Aasgaard, Minneapolis, Minnesota, was elected President of the Association. In his first message to the members, President Aasgaard presents some challenging statements which we hope every member will heed.

### TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

DEAR FRIENDS:

At the recent triennial meeting of the Association I was elected president and it is needless to say that I appreciate the confidence you have shown in me. I hope I may be of some help in our common plan to further the wonderful program carried on by the men who have had the responsibility in the past.

Considering the successful attainment of many projects in the past gives me courage to accept this responsibility. Money has been secured and through the competent leadership of Dr. Theodore Blegen of the University of Minnesota, others on the publication committee, and Professor J. Jørgen Thompson, our continuing secretary, these projects have become a reality. I am mindful of men like Dr. Birger Osland, who already has given me a comprehensive view of the work of the Association and assured me of continuing encouragement and support, as well as the great interest of our deceased friend, Dr. Olaf Halvorson.

Reviewing the situation I find two things that are especially important.

One: A continuing effort must be made to secure new members. The secretary's last report showed

a decrease in membership during the past triennium. I am especially concerned that a great number of new members may be found among the younger generation of Norwegian Americans. They must be helped to realize that we have a priceless heritage and the appreciation of it should be handed down from generation to generation. It should be a mark of distinction and honor to be a member of the Norwegian-American Historical Association.

Two: We need a steady flow of money to continue publication of material now at hand. Projects now under the wise and able leadership of Dr. Blegen should be in the hands of the printers at this time.

With the members there should be an open mind and keenness of understanding to secure new material for evaluation by our editorial committee. No doubt a great deal of historical material can be secured. Seek out in your community and in your relation to families those who may have letters and other information that has not been brought to light.

The Norwegian American National Societies — "bygdelags"—should be encouraged to secure such valuable material. Thus their influence would be exerted in wider circles than the annual rallies and meetings and would be increased by something that would live after the members are gone.

In church work, in which I have been active, I have found that no man could accomplish or take credit for accomplishing things which really are important and of lasting worth. There must be group willingness and understanding to carry it out. Therefore, I ask for help, encouragement and advice from every one of you. We are workers together in this program, which has received praise and appreciation for the consistent contribution made by the men and women who are transmitting it to us today.

In closing I wish to quote the words of our friend, the late Dr. Lars W. Boe, a former member:

"Ours is a mediating generation. By training and tradition we live in the spiritual and cultural land of the fathers. With our children we are steadily marching into the land of tomorrow. Ours is the wealth of two cultures and often the poverty of the desert wanderer. We live between memory and reality. Ours is the agony of a divided loyalty and joy in the discovery of a new unity. Like Moses of old we see the new but cannot fully enter in. To us has been given the task of mediating a culture, of preserving and transferring to our children in a new land the cultural and spiritual values bound up in the character, art, music, literature, and Christian faith of a generation no longer found even in the land from which the fathers came.

"Insofar as these values have been preserved in a Norwegian atmosphere and in the Norwegian language it has been in the form they had when brought over. When released in the language and genius of America they have again become sources of inspiration and power, and in the hearts and minds of a far greater number than our own flesh and blood. Ours is the privilege of releasing for America values that sustained the spirit and life of our forebears for generations. We must become conscious of our responsibility. If we pass on without opening the treasure chest, it will not be done. Our obligation is to translate in the largest sense and to carry over."

J. A. AASGAARD.

## THE TENTH TRIENNIAL MEETING

(Continued from Page One)

On April 1, 1952, the membership of the Association totaled 1,064. Since then 152 have cancelled their memberships, 51 have died, 72 have ignored the correspondence from the Secretary's office or letters have been returned unclaimed, 23 have moved and left no forwarding address. This would reduce our membership to 766, but during that time 51 new members have been added, so the present membership roll stands at 817. This does not include standing orders by Libraries for the books we publish, which usually have been added to the membership roll.

Breaking the membership into classes, there are 651 Associate members, 111 Sustaining, 44 Life, of which 11 are Memorials, making a total of 55, which makes a total of 817, as mentioned above. To me this situation appears critical. Would it be possible to arouse our membership as a whole to action? What will your answer be?

### PUBLICATIONS

A second printing of 1,000 copies, besides the 1,500 of the first edition of the book, *Grass of the Earth*, by Aagot Raaen, has been sold out. Apparently two of our publications will soon be listed as out of print. They are: *Norwegian Sailors on the Great Lakes*, by Knut Gjerset (we have only 25 copies on hand); the second book is *Laur Larsen: Pioneer College President*, by Karen Larsen, of which we have 57 copies.

### ARCHIVES

The Archives continue to receive considerable material of real historical value. Some of our members have evidenced active interest in this matter by being on the alert for historical material.

The persons who have come to do research during the past year have been more numerous than previously. The time spent in the archives has varied from one day to three weeks. To the Secretary's desk come a large number of requests for verification of certain data, or for facts pertaining to historical events.

## OUR NEXT BOOK

After some unavoidable delays we look for *Studies and Records, Vol. 18*, to be ready for distribution to our members by the latter part of this month.

The Board of Editors has assembled some very interesting reading material. Here is the table of contents:

- Norwegian Migration to America—Einar Haugen
- A Little More Light on the Kendall Colony—Richard Canuteson
- Rasmus B. Anderson, Pioneer and Crusader—Paul Knaplund
- Early Norwegian Settlement in the Rockies—Kenneth Bjork
- Segregation and Assimilation of Norwegian Settlements in Wisconsin—Peter A. Munch
- The Novels of Peer Strømme—Gerald H. Thorson
- Norwegian-American Bygdelags—Jacob Hodnefield
- Some Recent Publications Relating to Norwegian-American History, XIV—Jacob Hodnefield